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LEARNING BY DESIGN

ASU FIDM, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, Otis College of Art and Design, and Woodbury University recently showcased their graduating design students' work, which blended the visions of these emerging designers with inspiration from fashion's most influential artists.

For more looks, see pages 4 and 6.



TECHNOLOGY

AI and Data Highlighted as the Future of Fashion During PI Apparel in L.A.

By Dorothy Crouch *Contributing Writer*

PI Apparel West Coast visited Los Angeles recently when parent company **Market Key** hosted the event at the **Luxe Sunset Boulevard Hotel**. After nearly a decade of hosting a PI Apparel West Coast edition, the conference brought together fashion professionals from different areas of the industry including design, manufacturing, retail and education to forge introductions with the savvy technology innovators who will lead the business toward solutions that will support customer conversion, supply-chain management, designer communication and transparent sourcing.

The event addressed fashion's largest current pain points that can be solved through technology solutions. It was the source for exploring technological innovations with a heavy focus on artificial intelligence and leveraging data to streamline business practices across the industry.

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ACTIVEWEAR TRENDS

SS25 Active: Regenerated!

By Peclers Paris

As science, nature and tech combine to imagine a more sustainable future, a new version of modernity takes shape—a prospective way of life centered on well-being, innovation and, last but not least, mobility. Therefore, the categories that have organized our apparel consumption so far seem less and less relevant. More than inspiring each other, casualwear and sportswear more and more answer the same brief: functionality turned aesthetic, making active sportswear a laboratory for new ideas, materials, volumes and styles.

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INSIDE

Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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TEXTILES

Swedish Investment Firm Altor Acquires Renewcell

Cotton-recycling pioneer **Renewcell** has announced that its remaining assets have been acquired by **Altor**, an investment firm based in Sweden, and will now be known as **Circulose**.

The technology of recycling cotton to make a dissolving pulp for MMCF producers such as viscose has been a cornerstone of the company's operations. Circulose pulp, the innovative solution for textile-to-textile circularity, will remain at the forefront to help create a sustainable future for the fashion and textile industries. This commitment to innovation and sustainability is further strengthened by Altor's investment, which provides the resources and network needed to extend Circulose's impact and reach.

"We extend our deepest gratitude to our customers, partners and stakeholders for their unwavering support and collaboration during this journey," said Magnus Lundmark, chief executive officer at Circulose. "Together we will continue to drive positive change, leveraging Altor's expertise and resources to enhance our capabilities and secure a con-



Renewcell's Circulose is globally the only material that has been produced at scale from 100 percent textile waste based on a closed-loop, chemical-recycling process.

fident future for Circulose and the broader textile community."

Renewcell was originally founded in 2012 by innovators from Stockholm's **KTH Royal Institute of Technology**. In February

2023, the company filed for bankruptcy and has since looked for a new owner to safeguard the patented process of producing Circulose pulp from 100 percent textile waste. Circulose is globally the only material that has been produced at scale from 100 percent textile waste based on a closed-loop, chemical-recycling process.

The material is produced in a strategically located factory in Ortvik, Sweden, a region with historically significant know-how from the pulp and paper industry. Circulose pulp is used to spin fibers that are turned into fabrics and used for new high-quality textile products.

"We don't shy away from a challenge, and this one is worth taking," said Clara Zverina, principal at Altor, "both for the uniqueness of the patented technology and the urgency of scaling circular solutions for the entire textile and fashion industry, particularly to replace virgin cotton and MMCF. We are determined to partner with key stakeholders across the value chain to together unlock the potential of Circulose."—*Christian Chensvold*

RETAIL

Kevan Hall Hosts Cannes Pop-up Experience During Film Festival

Kevan Hall found inspiration for his Spring 2024 Côte d'Azur collection during a 2023 visit to the **Cannes Film Festival**. The designer recently returned to the French Riviera city to host a pop-up destination May 17–23, with a presentation day May 19, during the 2024 film festival, which took place May 14–25.

Providing a luxury bricks-and-mortar experience at 18 Rue Buttura allowed Hall to court new European clients and convert them to repeat customers who will engage with the

brand via the designer's e-commerce options.

"After attending the Cannes Film Festival in 2023, I was thrilled to return one year later to open the Kevan Hall PopUp store in a prime location in the heart of the shopping district," Hall explained. "The margins are significantly greater selling direct to consumers and also gives the customer the confidence to purchase additional products online once they've seen the quality, fit and had a positive retail experience."

Hall designed the ready-to-wear collection



The success of Kevan Hall's Spring 2024 Côte d'Azur ready-to-wear collection pop-up at the Cannes Film Festival may lead to pop-ups in other upscale destinations.

with the work of French artist Sonia Dulaney in mind. This design process led Hall to create pieces with colorful prints, crinkle chif-fons, embroidered striped georgettes, fil coupé silk caftans, power suits, cocktail dresses and red-carpet gowns.

The Cannes pop-up store also allowed Hall to gauge the retail climate as customers experienced the brand. Hall's pieces resonated with customers, and the designer recognized the potential to expand his pop-up experience to additional regions of the world while showcasing the collection in the city that inspired it.

"After opening, I realized that the brand can scale to other countries with great success," said Hall. "We are currently looking at other opportunities to connect with clients with pop-up stores in various upscale destinations in addition to building our wholesale distribution and exploring licensing opportunities."—*Dorothy Crouch*

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Inside the Industry

First Citizens Bank has provided \$31.5 million in financing to national fashion retailer Jaclyn LLC for the purchase of a newly constructed industrial warehouse and distribution center in Southern California. The warehouse will serve as the new West Coast shipping and distribution center for Jaclyn and its affiliated companies of the Golden Touch Group. "We have a long-established history partnering with First Citizens on strategic ventures that add value to our business," said John Bang, CFO of Jaclyn and Golden Touch. "The solutions-driven approach of the teams at First Citizens delivers expertise, agility and thoroughness to the financing process."

The Santa Monica College Fashion Program will present its annual student fashion show—LA Mode 2024—at 7 p.m. on June 14 on the SMC main campus at 1900 Pico Blvd. "Timeless Style & Substance" is the theme for this year's show. The outdoor "Peach Carpet" begins at 5 with sponsored giveaways, marketplace stalls and the chance for SMC alums, current students and fashion-industry guests to reconnect before the show. The show's mix of casual, cocktail, club and avant-garde styles will feature 20 collections, led by SMC fashion professors La Tanya Louis, Lorrie Ivas and technology consultant Wynn Armstrong. Industry professionals, including designers, stylists and retailers, will judge the collections.

Lycra recently served as a 2024 thought-leadership partner of the United Nations Fashion and Lifestyle Network, participating in the third-annual meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Jean Hegedus, The LYCRA Company's sustainability director, joined the panel discussion on "Elevating Fashion: Sustainable Practices and Strategic Insights in the Apparel Industry." She highlighted Lycra's collaboration with Qore to use its Qira product to potentially help reduce the carbon footprint of Lycra fiber by up to 44 percent. Available in early 2025, the patented bio-derived Lycra fiber made with Qira will consist of 70 percent renewable content derived from dent corn. This renewable spandex will be the first available on a large scale and will deliver equivalent performance to traditional Lycra fiber without requiring reengineering.

The Dallas Market Center is preparing to welcome top retailers and buying groups representing billions of dollars in purchasing power at the June markets, which include Apparel & Accessories (June 11–14), the Total Home & Gift Market (June 19–25) and Lightovation (June 19–22). "The interest in doing business at Dallas Market Center by large-volume buyers has only increased because we offer an efficient, supportive and safe location," said Cindy Morris, president and CEO of the DMC. "Our marketplace and private meeting spaces allow for these important buyers to see new products and feel welcome." Large-volume buyers are provided a range of support and amenities including dedicated staff members to assist them, private buy space, catering services and a new meeting space on the 4th floor of the World Trade Center on the DMC campus.

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ASU FIDM



Fashion Students Look to L.A. Cityscapes and Fashion Veterans for Inspiration

By Dorothy Crouch Contributing Writer

Graduation season is in full swing. For design students at **ASU FIDM**, **Los Angeles Trade-Technical College**, **Otis College of Art and Design**, and **Woodbury University** this time of year is more than just a stepping stone toward their next career stages—it is an opportunity to showcase the designs they’ve conceptualized and executed over the last few years. These students have blended their own visions with the influence of Hollywood glamour, deep roots in apparel manufacturing and access to some of fashion’s most influential artists.

These schools recently hosted their student showcases to share the culmination of the emerging designers’ hard work and allow them to experience all the elements of fashion-show production.

LATTC presents its Gold Thimble

LATTC’s semiannual **Gold Thimble Fashion Show** was hosted under the theme of “Tribute to Los Angeles Architecture.” Twenty-two graduating students from the Fashion Design program showed during the May 24 event under the guidance of Carlos Alcala and Russell Conte, instructors for the Gold Thimble Fashion Design courses, and Ana Duarte, instructor for the Gold Thimble Fashion Production course.

Under the theme, Jackson Cloyd was awarded first place; Leean Gonzalez, second; and Joaquin Estrada, third. In the athleisure category, Joseph Maldonado secured first place; Tania Sanchez, second; and Raul Vela, third. First place in the avant-garde category was awarded to Kaylah Nevarez; second to Joseph Maldonado; and third to William Hearn.

Luke Talman was awarded first place in the gender-neutral category, with Victoria Ortiz securing second and Raul Vela placing third. Within the eveningwear category, Tania Yamilet Sanchez was awarded first place; Raul Vela, second; and Nathan Barrientos, third. Joseph Maldonado was awarded first place in the menswear category, with Kaylah Nevarez placing second and William Hearn third. In swimwear, Joaquin Estrada and Victor Guevara shared first-place honors.

“The Gold Thimble Fashion Show is a fantastic opportunity for our students to display the skills they have honed over their two years in LATTC’s Fashion Design program,” said Joe Guerrieri, design and media-arts chair. “The theme was selected to celebrate the upcoming construction of a new Design and Media Arts building at Los Angeles Trade-Tech College. The students enthusiastically embraced the challenge, creating impressive pieces that reflect the city’s architectural heritage.”

Otis O-Launch Weekend highlights mentorship program

Senior and junior fashion students at Otis College of Art and Design participated in the school’s **O-Launch Weekend** May 10 with a runway showcase that highlighted artistry across design concentrations. Students worked with mentors in fashion design, including veteran designers and major brands. The runway show was the culmination of their work, which included application of creative briefs, deadline management and styling for shows.

Under the mentorship of **WearLACMA**, the student design team included Erin Bond, Ethan Prins and Victoria Ciavarella. Seokwon (Lena) Lee, MaiTae Lion Preece and Helen Liu worked with **Revolve**. The **Bleu/Rod Beattie** resort and swimwear mentorship program included Sarah Park,

Kiriana Lanuza, Ray Kim and Amber Gilliland. A contemporary menswear mentorship by **Amiri** featured WooYoung Choi, Tina Chen, Hyeonseo Park, Linjie Xu, Jineni Mei, Ying Tung Owen Yeung and Zhiyou Pan. The Marcus Clayton program included Nadine Cruz Cunha, Shiwen Qin, Alexis Boyd, Kexin Li and Ranze Zhang. Saipeng Ye, Hyeonseo Park, Ngai Wan Christina Fong, Roland Wu and Nadine Cruz Cunha worked under the **J.Crew** mentorship. The **Blizzard Entertainment/Diablo** mentorship featured work from Jessica Chen, Manfei Zhao, Cici An, Runchen Han, Aryanna Saadat, Priscilla Torres Sepulveda, Zhiyou Pan, Ran Tian, Jineni Mei, Mert Kantul, Yinuo Li, Ying Tung Owen Yeung, Shihang Lian, Yizhen Jia, Leah Li, Carly Jarocki, Kaiyu Shi and Alexis Boyd, who created sportswear designs based on the video games **Overwatch** and **Diablo** for display on a virtual runway. A **Maggie Sottero** mentorship focused on sustainability, allowing students to reimagine stock wedding gowns for a greener approach to bridal. This mentorship included student designers Evangelia Gamberdella, Manfei Zhao, Jessica Chen, Aryanna Saadat, Maria Hernandez and Megan Dancil.

Woodbury honors fashion veterans

Woodbury University hosted its 59th annual **Fashion Runway Benefit** under the theme “Parallel Universes.” The May 9 event at the **Alex Theater** was momentous for the students but also honored veteran Los Angeles–based designers and co-founders of the **Black Design Collective** Kevan Hall and TJ Walker with the Fashion Leadership Award.

“TJ Walker and Kevan Hall represent extraordinary careers and community outreach, embody their organization’s mission,

➡ **Student Fashion** page 6

LATTC



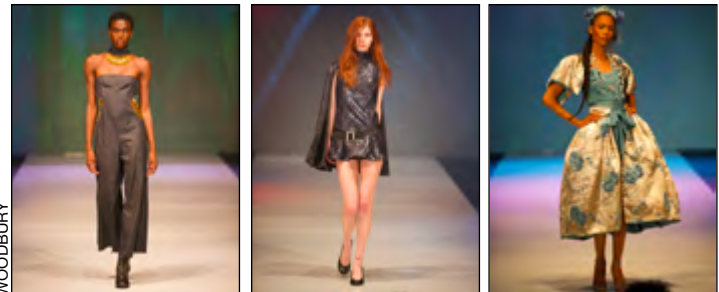
Jackson Cloyd Joaquin Estrada and Victor Guevara Joseph Maldonado Joseph Maldonado Tania Yamilet Sanchez Luke Talman

OTIS



Cici An and Runchen Han Erin Bond Alexis Boyd Jessica Chen and Manfei Zhao Tina Chen WooYoung Choi Victoria Ciavarella Nadine Cruz Cunha Megan Dancil Ngai Wan Christina Fong Evangelia Gamberdella Amber Gilliland

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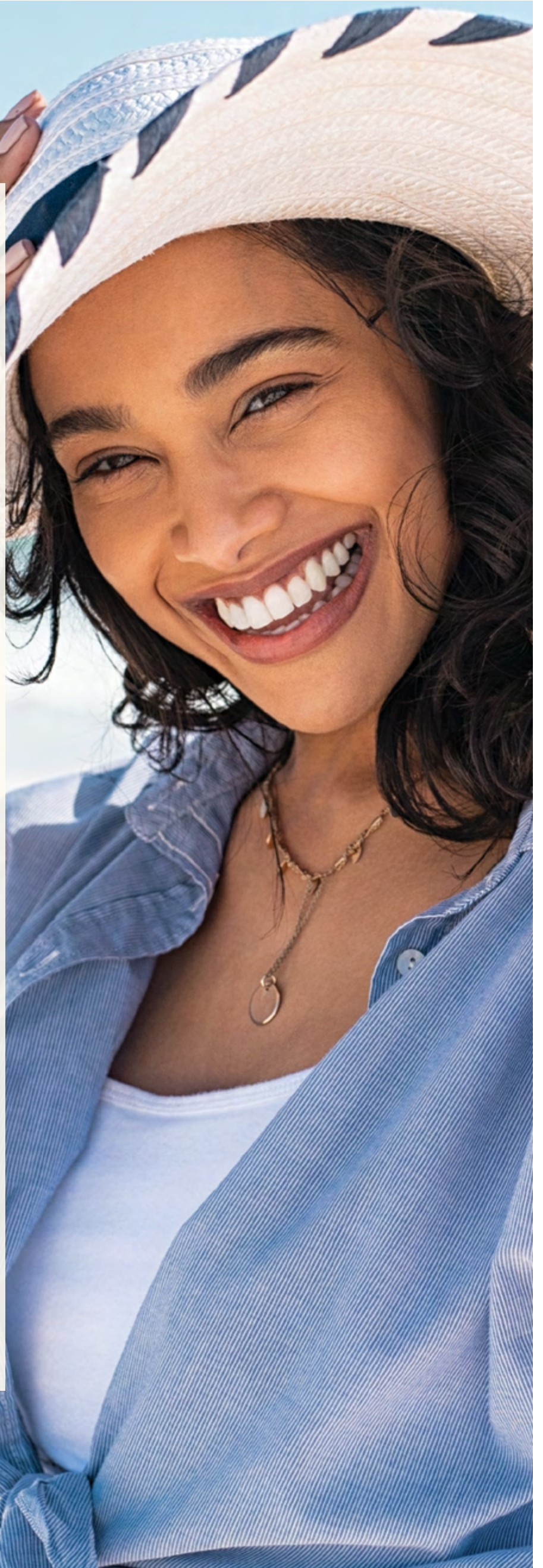
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Sarah Park MaiTae Lion Preece Ethan Prins Shiwen Qin Aryanna Saadat and Maria Hernandez Aryanna Saadat and Priscilla Torres Sepulveda Kaiyu Shi and Alexis Boyd Roland Wu Linjie Xu (front), Jineni Mei (back) Saipeng Ye Ranze Zhang Manfei Zhao and Jessica Chen

Student Fashion *Continued from page 4*

and promote the highest standards of ethics, education and professional excellence for the ultimate benefit of society and are still involved in the fashion world with their fashion brands,” said Anna Leiker, chair and associate professor at Woodbury.

Seniors Kassidy Hayslett, Nanor Petrossian, Isabella Ramirez and Angelica Torres were tasked with interpreting the “Parallel Universes” theme “to explore worlds conceived of as coexisting with and having certain similarities to the known world—but different from it in some fundamental way,” according to a statement from Leiker.

Torres found inspiration in the Victorian Era to design her “Enchanted Garden” collection, blending elegant elements from the time period with modern luxurious details. “Original Sin” by Ramirez explored women’s power and individuality through the lens of the designer’s Los Angeles roots, which were shaped through her Chicano heritage. Designing “Green Grass

Grows All Around” led Hayslett to explore self-appreciation and recognition that the grass is always green despite life’s challenges. The collection “Something Borrowed, Something New” was informed by Petrossian’s reflection on her Persian and Armenian heritage and how these experiences inspire her artistic expression as a designer and dance choreographer.

ASU FIDM Students Focus on Sustainability

Under the guidance of ASU FIDM educators Irina Tevzadze and Maria Behnen, 26 students from the school’s Fashion Design bachelor’s degree program presented more than 100 designs during a presentation at Arizona’s **Scottsdale Fashion Square**. The program required students to create a concept and design, do research, develop a pattern and produce their collections.

Students drew inspiration from sources including weather events such as monsoons, popular entertainment troupe

Cirque du Soleil, circuit boards and computer chipsets. According to ASU FIDM, many students also drew from different facets of their heritage including hair braiding, gardening, Día de los Muertos and tea ceremonies. During the April 13 event, students presented different fashion categories including streetwear, daywear and eveningwear. Sustainability played a central role in many of the collections as students relied on upcycled materials, dead-stock fabrics and zero-waste patternmaking.

Students who showed during the event included Caroline McDonald, Eder Velazquez, Jessica Cordero, Brianna Calderon, Kelsi Kitagawa, Madison Nelson, Hei Yi Lam, Sydney Routin, LeeAnn Huang, Erin Brandes, Gifty Ulinwa, Julieta Lopez Ortega, Olivia Brown, Andrea Mendoza, Lizbeth Valdez, Aubreeana Adams, Kathleen Swenson, Michelle Mungarro, Jennifer Hernandez Murillo, Dejuan Russell, Emma Doskicz, Samantha Angulo, Christina Kabran, Taylor Johnson, Noé Dandurand and Alexander Diesner. ●

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PI Apparel *Continued from page 1*

Moving beyond the AI fear

The allure of creating ease for workers through technology is high, but recent advancements, including AI, have left some in the fashion industry—and nearly every other business—afraid of the power these tools could eventually wield and the jobs it could replace.

“The work is not going away, it’s just changing. What we try to do with AI is we want designers, merchandisers, developers and testers to do the things they want to do and not enter data into spreadsheets all day,” explained Matt Nakari, sales GEO lead for product lifecycle management provider **Centric Software**.

Many professionals in the technology industry who have developed these solutions understand that new innovations can seem scary but have simply been developed to reduce the burden of mundane tasks that prevent workers from completing the tasks they were hired to perform.

“A goal for every brand is to shorten your timeline, and when you implement PLM and digital product creation your initial out-of-the-box is that you might not shorten that end-to-end time but you’re going to streamline and make it more efficient in the middle so you can do things better,” Nakari said.

At the **DeSL** booth, Addison Cole, senior business consultant for the PLM provider, noted that the more intimate setting of the May 21–22 event allowed representatives from brands of every size to comfortably search for solutions that would best fit their operations.

“Some customers we’ve seen don’t have PLM at all so we’re getting a lot more SMB customers, which is good,” Cole said. “AI and how things are going to be used [are buzz-worthy]. There have been a lot of talks about AI in the sessions. Just getting engagement with the customers to see how they would be using it is important because it’s the future.”

When reflecting on the challenges fashion is currently facing, Ruoxi Gao, senior solutions manager for the brand innovation lab at **Amazon**, had advice for technology companies as they tackle these different issues that are limiting progress in the industry.



Market Key hosted PI Apparel West Coast with an exhibitor section, educational seminars and roundtable sessions to support collaboration between fashion professionals and technology innovators.



“There are a lot of problems to be solved, and a lot of tech companies are trying to solve them,” Gao said. “It’s important to really know how brands work internally, how designers work and how they actually think in order to help themselves to connect the problem with the solution.”

Collaboration over competition

Fashion’s state as an industry in which businesses have been secretive and, typically, unwilling to share best practices due to fear of revealing too much, resulting in loss of intellectual property or proprietary information, stifles progress. In recent years, however, this hurdle has been slowly lowered as brands, designers and manufacturers discover business is better and the industry stronger through sharing ideas surrounding greater efficiency, sustainability and resources.

“I’ve been shocked at how much collaboration over competition I am seeing. People from different walks of life and organizations are talking, and ideas can come from everywhere. The problems are so big—to solve them you can’t do enough collaboration,” said Hamilton Perkins, founder of a Norfolk, Va.-based eponymous brand of sustainable bags

and accessories. “You’re learning from them; they’re learning from you. The biggest things are communication and collaboration.”

Blockchain is one area of technology that can help move the industry forward in the spirit of collaboration and information sharing while also protecting brands’ intellectual property. As more brands contribute data to blockchain technology, traceability along the supply chain increases, which creates a more reliable, trustworthy industry. With sustainability regulations passing in the EU and United States, a transparent supply chain is crucial to aligning with new legislation. The technology also protects brands and their customers by facilitating authentication of products.

“Today, with the regulatory landscape, brands need to step up their game in terms of tracing their products and the origins of their products, so our talk focused on the basics of those logistics and getting people to start thinking about it,” said Chelsea Snyder, senior technical consultant at **Kalypso LP**, the digital-services provider for **Rockwell Automation**. “It’s not a sexy, exciting subject. Sometimes the word ‘sustainability’ makes it a bit more alluring, and there are solutions like PLM solutions that have the ability to collect data and traceability and blockchain as well.” ●



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Peclers Trends *Continued from page 1*

Life Is a (Tech) Trek

Climatic materials



Like an open-air laboratory where science, nature and adventure meet, sportswear brands create a modular and functional wardrobe, both hybrid and designer, perfect for new conscious and committed adventurers. Technical materials like mesh and netting, paper-touch leather alternatives, or featherweight nylons offer a balance of functionality and aesthetics for a comfortable, nomadic lifestyle. Fabrics do not just support the performance but perform something themselves, as this vest (far left) designed by Finnish researchers from Aalto University, thanks to solar panels concealed in the fabric, harnesses the energy of the sun to power wearable devices and body sensors.

Layered lightness



This bold, ongoing search for new materials has not only advantages in terms of functionality but also is the foundation for a new form of refinement—a sporty layering making the most of lightness and contrast. Because innovation makes it possible to combine breathability and thickness, ease of movement and the crispness of fabrics, constructed volumes and suppleness, it contributes to the gradual decompartmentalization of categories. Transparencies, fastening details, subtle shades, almost-tailored volumes become an integral part of the sports look. Sportswear is chic and for everyday, and practicing a sport becomes a holistic experience whose pleasantness starts with dressing and styling.

High-aesthetic-value accessories



Sports accessories follow the same logic. More practical, benefiting from high-end innovations in terms of materials and production, they are also fashion accessories in their own right, to be used in the city as well as on the track. 3D printed shoes, crossover bags and rucksacks designed to hold in the lightest, easiest way everything that is needed on a trail or a to store one's equipment, or sport caps easy to fasten and open and in breathable materials, are both an opportunity to perform better and to look more stylish. They also make total sense for a dressier occasion, becoming coveted fashion items, adding that little *je ne sais quoi* to the silhouette.

By Courtesy of Nature

Strange bio-mimicry



Innovation and decompartmentalization are also reflected in new patterns, color palettes, and even textures and shapes, all inspired by nature. It's an aesthetic that is less about realistically emulating nature than exploring an unusual, fantasized nature, seen through the lens of digital imagery. Think avatar more than English countryside. New camouflages between bio-mimicry and digital motifs, 3D effects and network prints, are an invitation to dive into a mysterious universe where patterns blend into an astonishing mix of seabed, space and nature. Accessories are the opportunity to be particularly daring and turn familiar objects into collectibles.

My own nature



Another way nature makes its way into the active-sportswear wardrobe is through the way new designs are as much inspired by as stage the athletic body. From garments that accompany the body in its endeavors, sportswear pieces are inspired to showcase and enhance the body with complex cuts that encourage movement while emphasizing the harmony of shapes and muscles. Think sports-inspired lingerie for multiple uses and high-performance jerseys that emphasize their reinforced zones to make them patterns in themselves. The body is shown, literally and figuratively. Once again, sophistication and technicity are one.

Made from nature



Sports and nature used to have a strained relationship. On the one hand, sports seemed to be a lot about enjoying nature and paying tribute to it. On the other hand, technical materials often meant polluting materials. Good news is that the answer is to be found in nature itself. As does Pyratex Elements, textiles made from blends of fibers derived from agricultural waste such as orange peel and banana. Banana fiber is naturally absorbent, biodegradable and allergen-free, with a low overall impact on the environment, qualities that seduced womenswear brand Ganni for its sports line. And Pangaia partnered with textile brand Genometica to create high-performance clean jerseys. ●

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In the heart of Los Angeles' Fashion District is the landmark New Mart Building. The showrooms of The New Mart represent the most exclusive and coveted contemporary lines from an international array of designers and manufacturers. The New Mart is unique in both architecture and style. The intimate setting creates a user-friendly experience for visitors. Each of its glass-fronted, uniquely designed showrooms provides a buying adventure that cannot be experienced at any other showroom destination. The New Mart is open year-round to the wholesale trade only and we host over 100 showrooms that carry over 500 collections.

Fashion District
The Evans Group

www.tegmade.com
The Evans Group (TEG) is a reputable LA-based fashion development and production house catering to both established and emerging designers. The company operates an acclaimed vertically integrated facility in the Arts District of Los Angeles, crafting patterns, samples, and small-volume productions. As a premier cut and sew manufacturer, TEG

specializes in bringing client designs to life with precision and excellence. For a comprehensive launch experience, services include design, fabric and trim sourcing, marketing, and mentorship. Since its establishment in 2005, TEG has assisted close to 4,000 clothing brands, generating over 30 year-round living-wage jobs.

Suppliers
Hangerlogic

www.hangerlogic.com
The purpose of a visual display is to tell a fashion story, highlight a trend, or demonstrate how merchandise could be worn and accessorized. Hangerlogic takes an innovative approach to promoting the development of a creative partnership with its customers. As the market leader since 1972, Hangerlogic manufactures and distributes garment hangers globally for many of the world's leading retailers and apparel brands. The company's strength is providing its customers with innovative designs using technology that is friendly to the environment while at the same time meeting the industry demands for performance and value-driven sustainability. Hangerlogic's customer service and sales team are here to help and will do everything possible to ensure that your hanger requirements are met in a cost-effective and timely manner.

Trade Shows
Collective Shows West

www.collectiveshows.com
Collective Shows West—the premier market for swim and active lifestyle—returns to the Paséa Hotel and Spa in Huntington Beach, Calif. on July 23–24. Exhibitors include Beach Riot, Beyond Yoga, Frankies Bikinis, Malai, ONEONE, RVCA, Spiritual Gangster, Sweaty Betty and many more. Collective Shows X Outdoor Retailer makes its debut at Outdoor Retailer Nov. 6–8 in Salt Lake City, Utah. This collaboration with the leading outdoor industry event offers buyers advance access to an expansive lineup of trending products and exhibitors the chance to meet in-demand retailers across both markets.

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IFJAG

info@ifjag.com
www.ifjag.com
IFJAG trade shows feature fashion jewelry and accessories from around the world with over 100 manufacturers or direct importers showing exclusive designs to IFJAG's unique venue of private showrooms which offer buyers a professional environment. The upcoming show is in Las Vegas running Aug. 17–20 at the Embassy Suites Las Vegas. Preregister at the IFJAG website. New exhibitors who would like to participate in the show are welcome. Buyers are offered complimentary lunch and local transportation reimbursement.

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FASHION



Visualizing Its Next Approach,
Malbon Golf Is on Par Fore Apparel

By Christian Chensvold Associate Editor

Never doubt the power of the mood board, for it's where dreams are visualized and great enterprises are born. **Malbon Golf** quite literally began as an **Instagram** account created by recreational golfer Stephen Malbon, whose wife, Erica, looked at it one day and said, "If you love golf that much, let's make a business out of it."

Fast forward and Malbon Golf is an inspiring success story unfolded within a niche market, boasting a robust e-commerce channel, retail stores in prime locations, a new wholesale business, sponsored pros such as Jason Day and a major presence in South Korea.

And it all happened like one of those fluke approach shots that hits the edge of a bunker, tumbles onto the green and rolls into the hole.

With entrepreneurial backgrounds—Stephen in marketing and publishing, Erica as co-founder of the spa chain **The Now**—the duo delved into the apparel industry with no experience "and decided to just figure it out as we go." They started by building brand identity and a loyal following through a Malbon Golf hangout—simulator, putting green, other apparel brands—at the corner of L.A.'s Fairfax and Melrose in 2017, then began tapping the customer base and figuring out what they wanted.

The answer was simple: simplicity itself—at least of a kind.

"Stephen found it hard to find golf clothes that didn't feel like a pro golfer's costume of tight-fitting athletic apparel," recalled Erica. "And what we heard from our community was that people wanted clothes they could feel like themselves in that were functional, stylish and youthful. So we became not a

performance brand designed for golf but a lifestyle brand inspired by golf."

Production timelines and supply-chain challenges proved the biggest obstacles in getting the brand running as smoothly as a putt on a freshly manicured green. "There have been a lot of frustrations to overcome," said Malbon, "but when people love the things you make you feel a validation. I'd advise others thinking of getting into apparel to build the messaging and mission of why you're doing it, and make that strong enough to help you weather the other issues. Don't just do it to make money, because if that's what you're after there are different industries you could get into."

Malbon Golf's biggest sales channel is its website, but it added wholesale accounts this year at selected clubhouses and boutiques. Its L.A. store is now at Melrose Place, and it operates others in Carmel, Calif., Miami and New York, with three more scheduled to open this year.

"We've definitely been pioneers," Erica reflected. "When we started there was no comparable brand in the space looking at it from our perspective, and people look to us as leaders in the 'creative golfers' space. We feel very fortunate that we get to impact so many people and help get them involved."

After years of well-publicized decline in participation, the sport of golf is on an upswing, with 45 million Americans having played the sport in 2023, no doubt helped by evangelist-entrepreneurs such as the Malbons.

"Our mission has always been to encourage people to take up the greatest game on earth, and I think if you have a message you will succeed."



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A background image showing a person's hands measuring a pink, pleated dress on a white mannequin. A white measuring tape is wrapped around the waist of the dress. The setting appears to be a professional sewing or fashion design studio with various equipment and materials visible in the background.

TEG

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